

THIS HERE PREPAREFULNESS IT IS OVERDONE



"Aint got sense enough to duck."

"NOWADAYS people don't do things by halves," said Barnett Zapp, the waist manufacturer; "they do 'em by from one and five-eighths up to sixes. In other words, they overdo 'em, and they don't get the results they expect to get."

"Sure I know," Louis Birsky the real estate agent agreed. "A feller starts out to get a million dollars in ten years—and all he gets is the ten years."

"I'm not talking from business," Zapp said.

"Not alone business," Birsky said. "But other things also. Take for instance getting married. Former times when a feller married a rich girl he might have gone so far as not to warn his wife's father and mother that they were digging their graves with their stomachs, y'understand, but that was the biggest extent of his impatience to probate the will, Zapp. Nowadays, before he buys the wedding ring even, he is already looking up in a Carnegie Library is there or is there not a book by the name 'The Son-in-Law's Companion; or, How to Prepare One Hundred Appetizing Dishes mit Sinai of Potassium.'"

"What has all this got to do mit Preparefulness, Birsky?" Zapp demanded; "which I was saying that when Preparefulness was coming in last year like cape effects in taffeta dresses, Birsky, I was in favor of it, but they overdone it, Birsky."

"Some women it suited, Zapp, aber not many, like white shoes," Birsky commented.

"Did I say something from white shoes?" Zapp asked, and Birsky was obliged to admit that he had not.

"Then what the devil you are talking nonsense?" Zapp continued. "I was saying that mit Preparefulness them people which is trying to get it has already overdone it. They started out to show to the *Leute* of the United States what Preparefulness really means, Birsky, and they ended up by showing that it means that 120,000 business men loses a whole day by walking up Broadway and Fifth Avenue, and concerns which expects goods by express didn't receive them because the express wagons was held up on the other side of Fifth Avenue from 9 A. M. to 6 P. M. Preparefulness also means that if you pick up a paper to see what is going on in the world, y'understand, you couldn't tell the news section from the advertising section on account of the speeches for Preparefulness which is printed twenty columns long in small type, like a notice of sale in an action to foreclose a second mortgage on a trunk line railroad mit a full description of all terminal property containing 25,664 acres be the said several dimensions more or less."

"You couldn't tell by the looks of the printing what a speech is about," Birsky said.

"I agree with you, Birsky," Zapp said, "but I already read some of them notices of foreclosure sale, Birsky, and if the fellers that are going round making

Last Year, When It Was Coming In, Like Cape Effects in Taffeta Dresses, Zapp Was in Favor of It, but 120,000 Men Marching on Broadway Held Up Delivery Wagons for Hours and Meant the Loss of a Business Day—Still, as Birsky Says, Maybe the Only Thing Against Preparefulness Is the People What's in Favor of It.

By MONTAGUE GLASS

Author of "Potash & Perlmutter," "Abe and Mawruss," etc.

Illustrations by Briggs

speeches on Preparefulness could be persuaded to read aloud a notice of sale instead, Birsky, it would be better for the country. For instance, you take this here general of the New York National Guard which he makes a speech that Preparefulness means compelling everybody to go for a soldier and get drilled so hard that he practically loses his mind and ain't got sense enough to duck when he sees a cannon ball coming his way, y'understand, and if instead he would have said: 'My friends: Pursuant to judgment entered May 10th, 1916, the undersigned will sell at public auction and so forth et cetera,' some of his audience might still have thought that Preparefulness was a pretty good thing. Also, Birsky, there is certain Preparefulness fellers making speeches and says that, not mentioning no names nor nothing, but hypocritically speaking, y'understand, if a certain nation in a continent which ain't Europe, Africa, Australia or America, and living, we would say, for example, on islands north of the Philippines or somewhere like that, was to land an army of thirty thousand men in California, y'understand, that they could walk away with the country, because we ain't got no navy to speak

Birsky," Zapp said. "The scare the feller throws into me by his speech is that if we get Preparefulness, Birsky, our navy is going to cost us a billion dollars a year instead of a hundred million. In fact, Birsky, all them Preparefulness fellers is the same in their speeches. They overdo it. Every one of 'em tells you that war is horrible but that it ain't one, two, six mit Preparefulness."

"Maybe Preparefulness is the same as all them other things which is good for you, like Prohibition, Not Smoking, Systematic Exercise, Dieting and Socialism," Birsky said. "The only thing against it is the people what's in favor of it."

"There's also the way they put it up to you," Zapp added. "Their talking points is bad, Birsky. For instance, you take a feller who is in favor of Prohibition, and he will tell you there is 3.1416 in the Nebraska States Prison for every

Kansas, dry, there was only .00000015 in Nebraska, wet, then he would be talking. Or put it another way, more attractive, Birsky, and say that during the last ten or fifteen years, as the case may be, that Kansas has been dry, y'understand, she has produced as many as .0000000001 grand opera, whereas in Nebraska, a wet state, there was produced during the same period only .0000000001 grand opera. In one *Augenblick* he shows you what Prohibition does for music, Birsky, and if a drinking feller is fond of music, as naturally a *Shikkerer* would be, Birsky, he says to himself: 'I am drinking away America's chance of becoming an artistic nation,' and he quits right then and there."

"Well, I'll tell you," Birsky said, "the times is past when it was considered that a musician, a picture painter or a *Schriftsteller* must got to be a drinker, Zapp. Things is getting now to be on an efficiency basis all around. A magazine oder a publisher would no more consider a story from a writer which drinks than the Pennsylvania Railroad would let work for them a *Shikkerer* as an engineer, Zapp, and the publisher is right, too. The U. M. W. of A. had the whole



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about—just a few navigatable sardine cans and tugs, like Turkey."

"What do you mean—we ain't got no navy to speak about?" Birsky said. "Why, every year for years already we spent on our navy over a hundred million dollars."

"I give you right, Birsky," Zapp said.

"Then what does he want to scare us like that for?" Birsky asked. "Japan ain't going to take no chances against a \$100,000,000 a year navy."

"You got ahold of the wrong scare,

county in Nebraska, a wet state, whereas in Kansas there is only 2.29999 state prisoners for every county in Kansas, a dry state. It figures out at somewhere around 85-100 of a prisoner in favor of Prohibition. What for an inducement is that, Birsky? Why don't he figure it out—say, in composers of music oder picture painters? If he could say there was .006234 composers in every county of Kansas, dry, for .000085 composers in every county of Nebraska, wet, y'understand, or that for every .0000002 picture painters in

matter out mit a boss publisher only last week, where the boss publisher refused to accept an article which he ordered from a union journeyman-writer on 'The Cocktail in Song and Story' because the feller smelt of cloves, y'understand."

"What are you talking nonsense—U. M. W. of A.?" Zapp cried.

"The United Magazine Workers of America," Birsky said. "They even made him threats that they would call out on him the Amalgamated Illustrators, New York Local No. 6, so they put the whole thing up to the Board of Arbi-



"The Boss Publisher refused to accept an article because the feller smelt of cloves."

trators of the American Council of Labor, y'understand, consisting of delegates from the Plumbers' Union, the Federated Poets of America, the Sandhogs' Union, the Rockmen and Excavators' Union, the Gr. Op. & Symph. Composers Local No. 1 and the Journeymen Plasterers, and the boss publisher won out."

"So you mean to told me that authors and poets is joining a union already?" Zapp exclaimed.

"And actors also," Birsky said. "Only last week the Actors has joined the American Federation of Labor, Zapp, and the same like the railroad workers is split up into Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, Firemen's Union, Trainmen's Union and Conductors' Union, Zapp, so you will see that there will be Juvenile and Leading Men's Unions, Brotherhood of Heavies and even Amalgamated Prima-donnas, mit union cards and buttons, y'understand. In fact, I wouldn't be surprised that if the feller which plays *Admiral the Honorable Sir Joseph Darby, K. C., M. D., L. R. C. P.*, comes on in the first act, y'understand, and crosses to door R., *verstehst du mich*, and says to Kirby: 'Lady Susan is downstairs in the library. Tell her I wish to see her here at once,' y'understand, even though Kirby is only a footman, Zapp, he talks right up to him and says: 'Have you got your January card?' and if the *Admiral the Honorable Sir* has left it behind him in the dressing room, Zapp, either he would got to go back there and get it or tell Lady Susan himself that he wants to see her, because if Kirby tells her he's apt to get fined ten dollars by the Union and lose his card for the rest of the month. That's what it's come to among actors, Zapp, and I don't care if a feller would be playing Hamlet even, he wouldn't be allowed to kill the King in the last act unless him and the King could show Horatio and Laertes and all them fellers either a button or a card for the current month."

"Aber unions is for workmen, not for geniuses," Zapp declared.

"What do you mean—geniuses?" Birsky said. "That's an awful back number idee you got, Zapp. Do you think nowadays it helps a man any if he is a genius? Theatrical managers would just as lieve do a genius as anybody else—liever even. Publishers is the same way, Zapp; and so you see, Zapp, a genius needs a union more than a mechanic, because the people he works for, recognizing that the poor *Nebich* is a genius and not a business man, thinks it is a pity to miss such an opportunity when drawing the contract. On the other hand, Preparefulness fellers don't even admit that there is such a thing as a genius. Also they wouldn't recognize that there is even talent in the world. In fact, Zapp, their idee of Preparefulness is that smart business men, street sweepers, architects, lawyers, longshoremen, doctors, poets and truck drivers is all soldiers and should shoot and be shot down as such. According to them Preparefulness fellers, the ideal condition a country could be in is

that everybody should be strong enough to get shot, but as that could never be they are willing to save up for future use fellers with kidney, heart and stomach trouble, cripples, lunatics and the deaf, dumb and blind."

"I think, Birsky, you are pretty hard on them Preparefulness fellers," Zapp said.

"I judge 'em according to the speeches they make," Birsky replied, "which I don't think they are talking about real Preparefulness against war any more as Prohibitionists are talking about real Preparefulness against drunkards. To one of them Preparefulness fellers all men is soldiers, just as to a Prohibitionist all drinks is rum. Pilsener is rum and Burgundy is rum, and all them good light wines they drink by the quart in the old country is also rum, Zapp. So there you have it, Zapp. If America is going to be drilled and worried the way Germany, Russia and France was before the European trouble, and if Prohibition means cutting off beer and light wine with whiskey and rum, then Unpreparefulness and drunkenness ain't so bad, neither. Am I right or wrong, Zapp?"

"You are and you ain't," Zapp said. "Maybe the *Leute* over here is a *Bisschen* too peaceable. Maybe they need it *Preparefulness* the same like you've got to jack 'em up mit Prohibition, Blue Laws and Anti-trust Laws. People overdoes things nowadays. Former times a feller would take once in a while a glass *Schnapps*, y'understand, and gradually poison his kidneys like a gentleman, Birsky, aber nowadays he wants to get *Charoses* of the liver in from three weeks to a month, and would, too, if it wasn't for prohibition laws. It's the same way with doing business on Sunday. In Paris, where they allow Sunday opening, only the businesses is open on Sunday which is necessary for the people who work six days in the week that on the seventh they should enjoy,—businesses like restaurants, theatres and cafes, y'understand, aber in this country if we allowed that sort of thing, Birsky, the International Pressing Iron Company would claim: Whereas their operators had worked hard six days casting pressing irons in a factory which would of made the hot room of a Turkish bath seem like a cold storage warehouse, understand me, that the one thing necessary for them operators to prevent 'em from spending a miserable Sunday with nothing on their hands but time, y'understand, was to allow them to cast pressing irons in a 220-degree factory. Also, Birsky, if there was no anti-trust laws, y'understand, the entire business of this country would be in one combination, and the only people which knew the combination of the combination would be George D. Rockefeller, Abraham Carnegie and J. G. Morgan."

"Well, if there wasn't no Preparefulness, Prohibition or Trusts, Zapp," Birsky asked, "what would you and Bryan and Wilson and Roosevelt make speeches about?"